



*Top: Teaching the dog to bite down on padded sleeves is actually not a large part of protection work, even though this part of the sport gets the most attention. The dog must be accomplished in several disciplines that demand a great deal of practice, such as competitive obedience and tracking.*

## TRAIN YOUR AIREDALE IN PROTECTION SPORTS

Raili Mykkänen in Finland trains her Airedales in protection. Her bitch Norne, imported from Germany, has very strong drives and nerves. Trained to her present level she is a one-man's dog. At home she is very modest and capable to wait patiently for her share of attention and care in a busy every-day life. She is socially talented at home and with other dogs.

Raili merits the German breeding tradition, which has selected stock based on the working ability over the decades. Norne takes to new tasks very fast. She is also faithful to habit and strongly willing to please. That's why she is reliable in trial, paying no attention to bad weather or other disturbing conditions.

### FAMILY DOG FIRST AND FOREMOST

Outdoors Norne is physically strong and passionate, full of energy. Once when I was ill I asked my daughter,

Katja to take Norne out. I watched them from the window. Katja was only seven-years-old. When they were walking down the street, all of a sudden, the neighbor and his Belgian Shepherd stepped out. Norne has always had a strange ability to tease this particular, unpredictable and deceitful dog to an almost hysterical frenzy with small and invisible gestures. I got afraid of what's going to happen this time.

Unexpectedly, Norne just sat down, turned her head and just ignored the Belgian Shepherd. Even

Katja tried to persuade her to move by pulling her as hard she could but Norne just sat still until the dog had passed. It was Norne who was taking out my daughter and not vice versa.

### WORKING ABILITY AND VERSATILITY

To Raili the Airedale is the ideal working dog. It has an optimal mixture of physical structure and mental qualities. Those qualities are what a good protection dog must have: good nerves, instincts, courage, cooperation and persistence. Airedales of this type are often found in Russia and Germany and Raili finally end up with a bitch from a German line.

Every dog is an individual. An Airedale may not be suitable for training even if the qualities of its parents are excellent. There is no guarantee that the offspring inherits their parents' qualities. Therefore when Raili chooses a puppy, she uses aptitude tests. It is always promising if puppy has a strong nerve structure and strong drives.

An Airedale does not obtain grown-up self-confidence until in the age of three years. An Airedale of working dog capacity must be physically light, pliant, flexible and elastic. Airedales are large enough for protection training but not too bulky to handle.

### THREE SPORTS IN ONE

Protection sports demand control of three very different aspects: obedience, protection and field tracking. The younger the dog the more important it is to practice every sector separately in small and simple portions. When practicing the dog trainer must have a good knowledge of what is to be trained, enough time to carry out the planned exercise despite of unpredictable obstacles, and finally, ambition. It is also crucial to have professional helper when training bitework.

### THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The results you get in at trial are the results obtained by training. The best and most experienced trainers are often middle-aged or older. They have trained several dogs and achieved a sense of relativity, which enables them to evaluate themselves as trainers. They never make excuses for why things went wrong or blame the dog or the circumstances in the practice field. They concentrate on their dog and on planning next exercise with care. They follow and handle their dog in a way that prevent mistakes from happening, because every repeated failure means a risk in competition.

### KNOW YOURSELF FIRST

If you want to succeed with your Airedale, you must be realistic and critical of your own weaknesses. You must be able and willing to abandon wrong training methods if necessary. The handler must engage in



cooperation with the dog. Every dog is a cherished member of the family, but every dog is also raised to be a top sports-dog first and foremost. Without fair handling a dog can never become a top-ranking athlete.

### A YOUNG SPORT FOR AIREDALES

The championships held in Tuusula, Finland 1995, confirmed the theoretical opportunity to participate with Airedales in Finland. A member of German Team, Astor von Haus Schirmer, born in 1987, handled by Olof Seib, came 6th in the overall championship. This dog was the first Airedale seen by the Finnish helpers and agitators.

Olof Seib has successfully trained Norne and he prepares Norne's offspring Ziro for his competition career as well as Ziro's father Jalomonis Kleiner Schumacher aiming for future Championships. In 2004 Sumo, or Jalomonis Kleiner Schumacher, came in second at the Nordic Championship of IPO held in Sweden together with his handler Kim Florström. A historical result!

Most people ought now be convinced of the ability and potential of the Airedale. Their joyful and positive attitude to work is seen even in the toughest situation in competitions.

*Raili Mykkänen*

*Top: This is Sumo, Jalomonis Kleiner Schumacher, owned and trained by Kim Florström. Sumo is a true working Airedale imported to Finland from Germany. He succeeded in the fantastic feat of taking a third place at the 2004 IPO Nordic Championship where the best working dogs from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark met.*